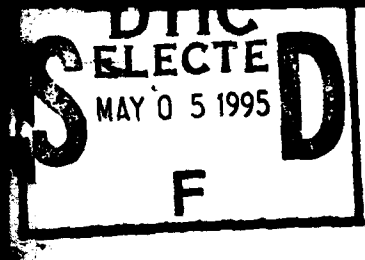


# EAST EUROPEAN

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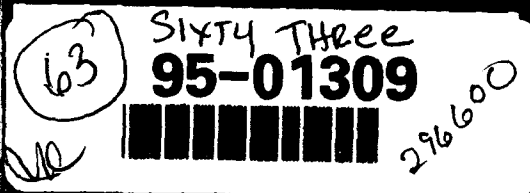
## AFTER THE COLD WAR

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# **EAST EUROPEAN MILITARY REFORM AFTER THE COLD WAR**

Implications for the United States

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Thomas S. Szayna, F. Stephen Larrabee

National Defense Research Institute

Prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense

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## PREFACE

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This report summarizes the findings of a multiyear RAND project analyzing the military and security policies of the former non-Soviet Warsaw Pact states since 1989. The report also presents some recommendations for U.S. policymakers on the expansion of security ties and defense assistance to these countries. The discussion in this report is based on individual studies of the East European militaries (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria) carried out as part of this project, as well as on a series of conferences sponsored by RAND with officials from the various countries (Budapest, 1990; Warsaw, 1990; Prague, 1991; Sofia, 1991; Budapest, 1992; and Warsaw, 1993). This report was completed in November 1994.

The project on the East European militaries was undertaken for the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy by the International Security and Defense Policy Center of RAND's National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center supported by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, and the defense agencies.

This report should be of interest to policymakers and scholars concerned with Eastern Europe and with the overall security environment in Europe.

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## SUMMARY

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The collapse of communist rule and the systemic reforms that followed in the former non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (FNSWP) countries caused major disruptions in the armed forces of these states. Overcoming the legacy of the communist era—the close regime-military ties and the Soviet-serving function of the armed forces—has been the fundamental challenge for the new leaderships in the FNSWP countries. Because of their roughly similar starting point and the similarities in their process of transformation, the militaries in all of the FNSWP countries have undergone similar processes of reform and have faced similar problems. Only Romania, due to its maverick position in the Warsaw Pact, presents a partial exception to the general pattern followed by the other FNSWP states.

### CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

In the realm of civil-military relations, the pattern of civilian control over the military exercised by the communist regimes has disintegrated but has not yet been replaced with new and effective channels of civilian control by the new democratic regimes. In fact, much of the military reform process so far has been designed to impose full civilian control over the military and eliminate the unintegrated and largely autonomous status of the military in society.

The process of military reform has proceeded under exceedingly difficult circumstances and has been guided by communist-style constitutions that were not easily applicable to the new conditions. In addition, neither the military nor the new political leaderships had

any experience in negotiating with each other, and when they did negotiate it was with deep distrust.

Although the legislatures in all of the FNSWP states quickly established a measure of nominal authority over the militaries through their power to appropriate funds, the more direct forms of control—appointment of civilian officials to the defense ministries and establishment of full parliamentary oversight of military activities—have proceeded much more slowly. The most acute problem was the lack of qualified civilians available to the new political leaderships, but inertia, other political priorities, and precommunist traditions of the military running the defense ministry contributed to the sometimes slow pace of “civilianization” of the defense ministry apparatus.

Within the ministries of defense, civilian control remains more a formality than a reality. The lack of a cadre of civilian defense specialists is a fundamental obstacle to full civilian control over the military. Until this deficiency is rectified, civil-military relations will be conflictual and civilian control will be difficult to achieve.

Things are no better from the perspective of the military, since the formal channels to the legislature through which it can articulate its interests are still developing. From a General Staff perspective, the process needs to be improved and the political bodies need to be more responsive to its needs in order to guarantee a well-functioning armed forces. Although civil-military relations vary from case to case, they are characterized by distrust and, in some cases, outright tension.

This does not mean that the militaries pose a danger in the short term to the process of political and economic reform in the FNSWP states. Despite some very real problems, the armed forces in all the states seem to accept fully the military's subordination to civilians. The differences arise over the extent of the subordination—something to be expected in democratic political systems.

### **MILITARY-TECHNICAL ISSUES**

On the military-technical side, the main problem for the FNSWP militaries has been to deal with the legacy of their former position as subordinate components of a military organization led and domi-



nated by the USSR. In practical terms, this has meant inheriting a tank-heavy, offensive force structure, a logistics system designed to support forces taking part in combat operations on foreign territory, and a widely skewed force deployment—none of these are appropriate for dealing with the new security challenges these countries face in the post-Cold War era. The main challenge has been to transform the militaries into lighter, defensively oriented forces deployed in a more balanced manner. Air defense probably presents the biggest problem: following the breakdown of the unified Warsaw Pact air defense system, substantial gaps in coverage have emerged.

The equipment inherited by the FNSWP countries poses a specific problem. Most of it is obsolete and unsuitable for the tasks these armed forces now need to perform. Further, almost all of it is of Soviet origin, making it incompatible with the equipment used by NATO armed forces. The FNSWP countries have few near-term options for rectifying their equipment problems. The economic disruptions and far-reaching cuts in defense budgets since the late 1980s preclude any major weapons modernization programs in the near future. The equipment problems are exacerbated by shortages of fuel and ammunition that have hit especially hard the technologically advanced branches of the FNSWP armed forces.

Finally, there are problems of cohesion within the military. An outflow of NCOs and junior officers has caused imbalances in the composition of the officer corps. Difficult and uncertain conditions have caused morale and discipline to suffer as well. These problems have no remedies in the near future.

In short, the FNSWP countries face an increasing number of potential challenges, which they must somehow meet with smaller and weaker armed forces that are beset by serious internal problems. With the exception of the elite units and with some variance depending on the country, the FNSWP militaries probably would not perform well in any potential combat situation against a modern adversary.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES**

The United States has a keen interest in the evolution of civil-military relations and the state of the defense establishments in the FNSWP

countries for a number of reasons, related mainly to strong U.S. support for their political transition to well-functioning representative democracies. A successful transition would remove a potential crisis area on NATO's borders. It is also a prerequisite for an eventual integration of the FNSWP countries into current Western economic and security structures.

An important component of the political transition is the establishment of effective civil-military relations. By definition, the FNSWP states will not have completed the process until they construct stable and routine civil-military relations wherein the military accepts full civilian control and is satisfied that its corporate interests are and will be well served.

The state of the armed forces of the FNSWP countries is of direct interest to the United States and to NATO in view of the consistent U.S. policy pronouncements and an emerging position that the integration of at least some of these states into NATO is no longer a question of "if" but of "when" and "how." No longer adversaries but partners and potential allies, the FNSWP countries' armed forces need to be judged on their ability to deter aggression and on their level of compatibility with the NATO militaries.

In this context, NATO's Partnership for Peace (PFP) program aims at a much greater interaction between NATO and the FNSWP militaries. Of immediate interest is the program's vision of cooperation in the realm of peacekeeping. Despite some major problems with their armed forces, the FNSWP states have considerable military potential, and their governments are quite willing to provide forces to take part in peacekeeping operations alongside the United States and NATO.

### **Partnership for Peace**

Within the perspective of PFP-envisioned cooperation between the U.S. and FNSWP militaries in the near term, the United States should pursue a policy of acquiring maximum gains from the partnership. Maximizing the number and availability of FNSWP peacekeeping forces that would serve alongside U.S. forces is one such goal. At the same time, the United States needs to ensure that cooperation under the PFP advances the long-term goal of eventual NATO membership

for at least some of the FNSWP states. Both sets of goals are closely related and mutually reinforcing.

PFP provides a means of self-selection for countries that most want to engage in a security relationship with the United States and NATO. However, the cooperation envisioned under the PFP entails substantial costs to the FNSWP states. Their extremely low defense budgets and lack of resources suggest that the United States and other NATO countries should continue and widen the program of sharing some costs of the expanded cooperation. Matching the FNSWP funds appropriated toward PFP implementation provides concrete support to these countries, advances the pace of PFP cooperation, and offers good payoffs to the United States.

### Personnel Training

The realm of personnel training is perhaps the most important area in which the United States can make a long-term impact. In order to change the military's unintegrated and somewhat autonomous status in the FNSWP societies, the United States should help those states create a cadre of civilian personnel that would provide an alternative viewpoint on security matters—an area that is now a virtual monopoly of the military. What is called for is a large-scale, well-funded program to train civilian defense specialists. Although the FNSWP countries face shortages in all areas of civilian expertise on defense policy and on management and oversight of the military, the most urgent need is in the realm of defense resource management, such as personnel administration, finance, and planning and budgeting.

There is also a need to rethink the program of U.S.-based training of officers from the FNSWP countries, since the current efforts have had limited impact. These officers are most likely to be involved in any joint peacekeeping operations alongside U.S. forces, and if the PFP cooperation is to take off, the numbers of these officers need to grow substantially. There is an urgent need for innovation in order to increase the pace of diffusion of Western training and knowledge to the FNSWP militaries. The officers trained in the United States have an almost uniformly positive experience from their stay. Over and above the real skills they bring back to their countries, they develop

an awareness of the way the U.S. armed forces function in society. It is this experience—which also has implications for the future development of civil-military relations in the FNSWP states—that is crucial. While continuing the programs of longer study for FNSWP officers, U.S. policymakers need to give serious thought to ways of reaching large numbers of the officer corps through a “shallow but wide” approach.

The International Military Education and Training (IMET) program has been the mainstay of exchanges with the FNSWP defense establishments since 1991. Since the overall funding levels for IMET are decreasing while the need is increasing for U.S.-trained personnel in the FNSWP countries, it may be wise to appropriate special additional funds to support the military educational exchanges with those states.

### **Technical Assistance**

Within the context of increased U.S. cooperation with the FNSWP militaries, both sides need to work to ensure equipment compatibility in the short term and eventual standardization in the long term. Because of budget problems, compatibility will generally require the modification and modernization of existing weapon systems. Equipment compatibility in the FNSWP forces most likely to operate alongside U.S. units in the near future (peacekeeping operations) should be the top priority. Within that category, priority should be put on communications. Since any FNSWP units participating alongside U.S. units in peacekeeping operations will probably need U.S. deployment and logistics support, it is worth considering selective improvements in their armaments or in mechanical components of specific weapon systems. Without the upgrading of equipment, logistical difficulties will limit the deployment of FNSWP units of any meaningful size to little more than the immediate vicinity of their own homelands.

The modification of existing FNSWP weapons to increase their compatibility with arms used by the NATO militaries will require substantial cooperation between defense firms in all the countries concerned. Lower costs in the FNSWP countries make coproduction and licensing arrangements attractive and give them their only viable near-term procurement prospects. Because of the current severe

budgetary constraints facing the FNSWP states, the United States and NATO need to stimulate cooperation with the defense industries in these countries as part of the PFP process by "jump-starting" it. This could take the form of credits for selective improvements in areas of mutual concern, such as equipping rapid-deployment units earmarked for participation alongside U.S. forces in peacekeeping missions. Air defense is another area where mutual interests overlap. The cooperation that may emerge in the defense economic sector has important consequences for the long-term goal of integration of at least some of the FNSWP states into NATO. It is important that the United States do what it can to avoid prolonging their dependence on Russian suppliers.

Mindful of the goal of eventual integration, U.S. policymakers should consider developing a comprehensive and integrated program for providing military assistance to the FNSWP countries to help them modernize their armed forces. Sales under the program should be based on explicit criteria, including consideration of what impact any weapons sales might have on the overall regional balance. Military assistance in the form of grant aid and purchase of equipment at low interest rates should also be an integral part of the program. Equipment that is phased out of the U.S. forces in Europe as they are drawn down could also be designated for the FNSWP states under a special arrangement.

## U.S. PRIORITIES

As the United States develops security ties with the FNSWP countries, it needs to distinguish between first- and second-tier priorities. For reasons of strategic location and the level of political and economic reform, the central European states deserve the greatest attention. Within that grouping, Poland occupies a special place due to its size, population, and location. In addition, Slovakia's efforts to participate in the PFP may call for special U.S. assistance because of that country's specific problems. Although they are of lesser direct importance to the United States, Bulgaria and Romania should not be neglected. It is in the U.S. interest to encourage the reform process in both those countries and assist their transitions as much as possible. Intraregional cooperation in the security and defense realm also deserves strong U.S. support.

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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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The authors would like to thank Ronald Asmus, John Tedstrom, and Jeffrey Simon for their helpful comments in the preparation of this study.

Soviet control over "Eastern Europe" collapsed in 1989.<sup>1</sup> The regaining of sovereignty by the former vassal states resulted in far-reaching shifts in their internal and external policies and altered fundamentally the political situation in Europe. Internally, the various states moved away from authoritarian political structures and centrally planned economies and toward representative democracies and market economies, each at its own pace. Externally, any serious and immediate security threat to the NATO countries disappeared as the Soviet-dominated alliance structure fell apart and the previous Soviet allies openly began to court NATO membership.

The emancipation of the armed forces of the various East European countries is the military dimension of the region's international re-orientation that came about with the collapse of communist rule.<sup>2</sup> In addition, as part of the process of democratization in the former non-Soviet Warsaw Pact (FNSWP) countries, all the militaries have undergone fundamental changes in their relationship to society. All the changes have combined to reduce the effectiveness of the FNSWP militaries, partly because of their previous dependence on and close connection with the Soviet military and partly because of

<sup>1</sup>We use the term "Eastern Europe" here for the sake of convenience in referring to the non-Soviet former members of the Warsaw Pact: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia (and its two successor states), Hungary, Poland, and Romania. The term was a product of the Cold War and has lost its meaning with the end of that conflict. We do not discuss here the German Democratic Republic, since it disappeared as a result of its unification with the Federal Republic of Germany in 1990.

<sup>2</sup>Romania is an exception to this general observation because of its previously different role within the Warsaw Pact.

changing civil-military relations in the FNSWP countries themselves. Problems arose in many areas, ranging from tensions in civil-military relations and personnel shortages in the officer corps to maldeployment of forces, growing obsolescence of many weapon systems, and the inability to modernize due to lack of funds. As of late 1994, the FNSWP militaries all continue to face serious internal problems that call into question their effectiveness.

As a result of their subordination to Soviet strategic goals, militaries in all of the FNSWP countries structurally remained copies of the Soviet military until late 1989, with at most a few small, local differences. Because of their roughly similar starting point and the similarities in their process of transformation, all the FNSWP militaries have traveled similar paths of reform and have faced similar problems.<sup>3</sup>

Given the similar structural problems and processes, there is some justification for dividing the FNSWP militaries into two subgroups: central European (Poland, Czechoslovakia and its successor states, and Hungary) and Balkan (Romania and Bulgaria). The main difference stems from the more gradual political transitions in Bulgaria and Romania, as opposed to an early and more decisive break with the past in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary. The slower evolution away from a communist system in Bulgaria and Romania resulted in strong differences between the two subgroups in the initial period.<sup>4</sup> The longer political evolution also delayed the start of a comprehensive military reform process in the two Balkan countries.<sup>5</sup> However, these differences have become less pronounced as a result

<sup>3</sup>Romania is a partial exception, due to the fact that the country had achieved a large degree of autonomy from the USSR before 1989. Since the Romanian military lacked close links with the Soviet military, the process of eliminating Soviet control (paramount in the other East European militaries) was not an issue in Romania.

<sup>4</sup>The communists ceased to have the major governing role in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary in 1989-1990. In contrast, the Bulgarian democratic opposition, represented by the Union of Democratic Forces, did not come to power until October 1991. In Romania, Ceausescu's overthrow was staged by reform communists. Romania's transition has followed a somewhat different and slower course than the transitions of the other FNSWP states.

<sup>5</sup>This is not to say that the Balkan countries did not initiate reform measures before the latter part of 1991, but these were largely cosmetic before then.



of the 1994 elections in Hungary and Poland, which returned postcommunist governments to power in both countries.

### **OBJECTIVE, APPROACH, AND ORGANIZATION**

This report summarizes the findings of our research on military reform in the FNSWP countries since 1989. Although we point out specific examples as evidence in support of the larger patterns, we do not aim to present case studies of military reform in the specific countries. Instead, we focus on the general patterns and common problems. We also examine the relevance of the military reform process for the United States and offer a set of policy recommendations.

This report is based on a series of individual country studies undertaken by RAND since 1990 and a number of conferences on military reform sponsored by RAND in the FNSWP states between 1990 and 1993. Specialized military print sources, general media in the original language and in translation, and interviews with civilian and military officials in the FNSWP countries formed the bulk of information used in the individual country studies.

The document contains two main sections. Chapter Two outlines the patterns of the military reform process in Eastern Europe and analyzes the problems still faced by those institutions. Chapter Three discusses the relevance of the findings to the United States and offers some recommendations as to how it can encourage and consolidate the process.

This report is based on information available as of November 1994. Thomas S. Szayna is the principal author.

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**THE REFORM OF THE MILITARIES**

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Any effort to analyze the extent of military reforms in Eastern Europe since 1989 must start with a sketch of the baseline position, namely, the situation of the various militaries under the communist regimes, especially in their final years. Most of the post-1989 problems in the FNSWP militaries can be traced to two underlying factors that are the result of four decades of communist rule: (1) the politicization of the military and the resulting relationship of the armed forces to the society, and (2) the satellite status of the FNSWP militaries in their relationship to the armed forces of the Soviet Union. As they have carried out the process of democratization, all the postcommunist regimes in the FNSWP states have had to undo the negative legacy of these two factors.

**CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS**

**The Military in the Communist Era**

The communist regimes in Eastern Europe maintained firm control over their militaries. In this sense, the political transition in Eastern Europe did not entail the "return of the military to the barracks." The military was already in the barracks, and it respected the principle of civilian control as a fundamental tenet of civil-military relations.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The case of Poland in the 1980s is somewhat different, in view of the Polish military's important role in governing the country after the imposition of martial law in 1981. However, after the initial year or two of martial law the military increasingly withdrew from its high-profile political role and returned to the barracks.

Thus, the problem in Eastern Europe was very different from what happened in political transitions in Latin America, where the military was in charge of the political instruments of power and the transition meant its retreat from political power.<sup>2</sup> Instead, the problem in Eastern Europe was the extremely close relationship between the military and the communist regime. The military was subordinated not to state but to party institutions. Much of the military reform process so far has been about the full subordination of the military to the constitutionally specified state institutions.

The problem of the close relationship between the communist party and the military stemmed from the very nature of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. The communist parties came to power and stayed there with the help of the USSR. The communist rulers lacked legitimacy and, being well aware of that, wanted to ensure that the military would not threaten their hold on political supremacy. So while paying lip service to the subordination of the military to state structures, the various ruling communist parties attempted to subordinate and co-opt the militaries and make them integral pillars of the regimes against perceived external and internal threats. Armed with the Marxist-Leninist justification that all institutions were to serve the ruling party, the communists even tried to use the military as an agent of socialization for their own ends.

The communist regimes carried out their efforts at politicization of the militaries through a complex and deep web of incentives and disincentives. Inducements in the form of material benefits, prestige, and social mobility acted as incentives for officers to identify with the regime. Communist party membership and the officer corps overlapped substantially, and membership in the party was a prerequisite for advancement into the higher ranks. The communist parties penetrated the various militaries at all levels and set up open as well as secret channels to monitor the allegiance of the officer corps to the regime. The Main Political Administration (actually a department of the Central Committee of the specific communist

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<sup>2</sup>This difference also has a corollary, in that the East European militaries (unlike many Latin American militaries) usually were not the instruments of domestic repression. Consequently, the overt popular hostility toward the Latin American militaries was not replicated in Eastern Europe.

party) and the communist party organization (party cells) in the military served as the former, while military counterintelligence was the main form of the latter.

The open attempt to politicize the military provides a sharp conceptual contrast to the basic norm governing the military's role in the developed Western countries, namely, that it should be an apolitical institution.<sup>3</sup> In effect, the communists tried to erase some of the institutional differences between the police and the military. By its nature, a police force is a political institution that concerns itself with domestic order and with upholding the regime, but a modern military (as envisioned in the developed Western countries) relies for its efficiency on being a nonpartisan state institution that transcends the political cleavages within a polity.

In retrospect, it appears that despite their enormous efforts over four decades, the communists' attempt to create a highly politicized military subservient to the regime proved only partially successful. The reasons are embedded in the nature of the military as an institution.

Although many officers were promoted (sometimes to the highest ranks) on the basis of political loyalty to the regime rather than competence in military matters, skilled professionals formed the core (probably the majority, by the late 1960s or early 1970s) of the FNSWP officer corps. The operational needs of the Warsaw Pact undoubtedly had something to do with such a development. Just how much the professional East European officers identified with the communist regimes had been suspect for a long time,<sup>4</sup> and pioneering empirical studies during the 1980s suggested that the degree of the politicization of FNSWP militaries was less than many observers

<sup>3</sup>Of course, no state institution can be completely "apolitical," but the dominant Western norms envision the military as a "nonpartisan" institution that eschews involvement in domestic politics.

<sup>4</sup>Western observers made considerable efforts in the 1980s to judge the reliability of East European militaries. See Daniel N. Nelson (ed.), *Soviet Allies: The Warsaw Pact and the Issue of Reliability*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984; Ivan Volgyes, *The Political Reliability of the Warsaw Pact Armies: The Southern Tier*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1982; and Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone et al., *Warsaw Pact: The Question of Cohesion* (4 vols.), Ottawa: Operational Research and Analysis Establishment/DND, 1981, 1984, 1986.

had initially thought.<sup>5</sup> As a rule, professional officers take great pride in their service, and their ethos is one of service to the society as a whole rather than to a specific political party.<sup>6</sup> By definition, professional military officers resent it when factors other than professional qualifications are the criteria for promotion and advancement. Even if one takes the view that civil-military relations in the Warsaw Pact communist states were symbiotic and generally free of institutional conflict, the subversion of normal channels of command through the imposition of politically motivated appointments (in other words, the imposition of informal channels of authority) was a challenge to vital military interests and must have been disliked by many professional officers.

The levels of politicization of the East European militaries varied over time, with the highly politicized model more characteristic of the 1950s. But with the increasing professionalization of the East European militaries, the degree of politicization greatly declined. By the 1980s, the highly politicized model no longer applied to some of the East European militaries, particularly Poland's.<sup>7</sup> The gradual decay of the communist regimes, most evident in the 1980s (especially in Poland and Hungary), caused a further deterioration in the ability of the regime leaders to maintain their high level of penetration and politicization of the militaries.

Thus, by the late 1980s, the FNSWP militaries were hybrid institutions; they exhibited substantial professionalism and their fundamental motivational orientation was centered on the society and the

<sup>5</sup>The studies took the form of interviews and surveys of East European ex-servicemen. See Alexander Alexiev and A. Ross Johnson, *East European Military Reliability: An Emigre-Based Assessment*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, R-3480, 1986, and Edmund Walendowski, *Combat Motivation of the Polish Forces*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.

<sup>6</sup>As defined by Samuel P. Huntington, professionalism of the officer corps entails specific expertise, responsibility, and corporateness. See his *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957. The service ethos that is internalized by a professional soldier includes a strong commitment and a sense of responsibility to defend the state (and the society) from external threats.

<sup>7</sup>This was particularly true in Poland because of the disintegration of the Polish communist party in 1980-1981.

state rather than the party,<sup>8</sup> but they also were nominally Soviet-serving institutions (except in Romania) that acted—at least potentially—as upholders of the communist regimes. The hybrid nature of the FNSWP militaries always made their allegiance to their respective regimes somewhat uncertain, and the communist rulers clearly did not trust them as much as they did the police and security forces. This is evident from the existence of the communist party's monitoring institutions in the military and its clandestine web of informers in the armed forces watching for any signs of political unreliability among line officers. The various communist regimes also were reluctant to use the military to quell domestic unrest, preferring to use police and internal security units and using the military only as a last resort. Evidence shows that their distrust was justified; in the few instances that the East European militaries were actually used against domestic opponents, some units refused to follow orders, resulting in severe crises within the officer corps.<sup>9</sup>

Final confirmation that the FNSWP militaries did not identify fully with the communist regimes and that their politicization seems to have been more superficial than real came during the political transformations in Eastern Europe in 1989, when the various militaries in the region proved unwilling or unable to prop up the collapsing communist regimes. The military leaderships' actions ranged from active opposition to the regime in the case of Romania, to tacit acceptance of the need for political reform in the case of Poland, to neutrality in the other three cases. But the basic principle of nondefense of the communist regimes in power was replayed in every one of the countries.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the constructive role of the militaries during the ouster of the old regimes, the anticommunist regimes that came to power in many

<sup>8</sup>For an excellent early analysis along these lines, see Larry L. Watts, "New-Type Socialist Armies," *Problems of Communism*, May–August 1988, pp. 101–109.

<sup>9</sup>Luba Fajfer, "The Polish Military and the Crisis of 1970," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, June 1993, pp. 205–225.

<sup>10</sup>For further elaboration on the role of the militaries in the various FNSWP states during the time of actual regime change, see Zoltan D. Barany, "East European Armed Forces in Transitions and Beyond," *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 1, March 1992, pp. 1–30.

of the East European states after 1989 held antagonistic views toward the military because of the militaries' decades-long close links to the communists.<sup>11</sup> In an understandable, if rather one-sided, view, the former dissidents distrusted the military, due to the fact that the military had functioned in the context of the Soviet-dominated alliance structure, contained a large number of communist party members, and had participated in various domestic crackdowns (Poland in 1956, 1970, and 1981, and Czechoslovakia in 1969). Furthermore, the new political leaders regarded the military as a potential base for an effort by the old guard to regain political power. As a result, after 1989, the military lost its privileged status in all the former communist states of Eastern Europe, with the exception of Romania.

Aware of the distrust and expecting politically motivated purges, the militaries remained wary of any civilian initiatives in the security and military realm, often regarding the new civilian leaderships as incompetent amateurs whose reforms could jeopardize the security of the country. There was some truth to such a view, since the new political leaders had little or no experience in defense matters and some of their views were often naive. The initial security policy pursued by the Czechoslovak government in 1990 is a case in point.<sup>12</sup>

The pattern outlined above was followed by all the countries except Romania. The Romanian experience was just the opposite. Since it had not been tainted by close association with the USSR and since it played a pivotal role in ousting the Ceausescu regime from power,

<sup>11</sup>Romania was an exception. The National Salvation Front (NSF) that came to power after the ouster of Ceausescu was composed of figures (civilian and military) who had belonged to the communist party. The NSF did not have an antimilitary orientation, and the military's antagonism was directed toward the civilians around Ceausescu rather than the party as a whole. The Romanian case simply illustrates the atypical power base of Ceausescu; rather than relying on the communist party, Ceausescu's rule was based more on family (clan) ties.

<sup>12</sup>Dubbed the "romantic phase" by some Czechs and Slovaks, the Civic Forum-led government initially believed that a comprehensive CSCE-based security regime in Europe was a sufficient guarantee of Czechoslovakia's security. Beginning in mid-1990, however, Czechoslovak attitudes toward CSCE and NATO began to shift in a more realistic direction, as Czechoslovak leaders acquired more political experience and maturity. See Thomas S. Szayna and James B. Steinberg, *Civil-Military Relations and National Security Thinking in Czechoslovakia: A Conference Report*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, R-4195-OSD/A/AF, 1992. Also see F. Stephen Larrabee, *East European Security After the Cold War*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-254-USDP, 1993, pp. 61-62.

the Romanian military gained an even greater prestige as a truly national institution. Indeed, of all the institutions in post-Ceausescu Romania, the military holds the highest popular trust.

### **The Tasks of Reforming Civil-Military Relations**

The specific tasks of restructuring civil-military relations faced by the new leaderships that came to power in Eastern Europe revolved around one main goal: to eliminate the hybrid nature of the militaries by reestablishing their formal internal lines of authority and removing the informal, but sometimes dominant, channels. Such a goal entails a whole new form of civil-military relations. The basic task has been to achieve the radical disengagement of the military from politics, for a close overlap between the officer corps and one political party is incompatible with the role of the military in a modern democratic society. Even if communist party membership was only a formality that carried little substance for many officers, the military had to be changed so that membership in a political party would be irrelevant to professional advancement. Conversely, the communist party's monopoly on all matters relating to the state, including defense, had to be curtailed so as to insure equal access to positions of state power to all political movements, with the access being apportioned and legitimized through elections.

The specific steps undertaken to achieve these goals can be grouped into several categories:<sup>13</sup>

- Severing all links between the communist party and the military;
- Abolishing the communist party's monopoly within the military;
- Establishing a meritocracy and prohibiting political criteria from being a factor in the functioning of the armed forces;
- Subordinating the military to parliamentary control;
- Establishing formal channels to the legislature for articulating the military's institutional interests.

<sup>13</sup>These tasks are spelled out a bit differently and in more detail in Anton Bebler, "Democratisation and the East-Central European Professional Military," *RUSI Journal* (Royal United Services Institute), Spring 1991, pp. 47-51.



Efforts to implement these goals began concurrently with the political changes after 1989. On the whole, and fitting in with the axiom that it is easier to destroy than to build, the first two goals were easily accomplished. However, the remaining three tasks proved more difficult.

### **Eliminating Communist-Era Institutions and Practices**

The related tasks of severing all links between the communist party and the military and abolishing the party's monopoly within the military were the starting points for reform of civil-military relations. These tasks began to be implemented with the elimination of the constitutional clauses guaranteeing the communist parties their self-appointed role as the "leading forces" within the FNSWP states—one of the first steps taken by the new leaderships. The constitutional changes made the communist party legally equal to other political parties. In the military sphere, the change removed the legal rationale for the special treatment accorded to the communist party and led to the elimination of the communist apparatus within the armed forces.

A problem that emerged early in the reform process was the possibility that the end of the communist monopoly would open the door to other parties spreading their activities to the military. In the early stages of the transition process, an expansion of ideological infighting to the armed forces could have been disastrous for the transition process as a whole. Consequently, all of the FNSWP states passed laws barring active military personnel from membership in any political party and making the military off-limits for the activity of political parties. The far-reaching legislation has been largely successful in removing the active military from direct participation in the political arena. Although in practice some officers have ignored the law—for example, during the 1993 Polish parliamentary elections, officers on active duty ran for office on the tickets of several parties (including some clearly fringe organizations)—by and large the law has had the desired effect.

**The Political Apparatus.** In the aftermath of the constitutional changes instituted in 1989 and 1990, the most important links between the communist party and the military were quickly disbanded.

Those links consisted of the party's institutions within the military, such as the Main Political Administrations (MPA)—actually departments of the Central Committees of the specific communist parties, employing a huge apparatus of political officers considered by many line officers as the overt police presence in the military—and party cells within military units. A host of other links existed, for example in the military educational and military legal spheres, but these were areas of system maintenance rather than crucial instruments of control. These institutions needed far-reaching reform but not outright abolishment, for they had a legitimate role in a military in a democratic society.

Only a very few members of the officer corps found these moves problematic and resigned their commissions. Indeed, many officers spontaneously resigned from the party and pressed for the elimination of the communist party presence from the military even before such changes had become law (especially in Poland and Hungary in 1989).

In most of the countries of the region, the political apparatuses within the militaries (whose official function was to provide Marxist-Leninist indoctrination to the conscripts) were transformed into "educational" administrations. Since the transformed institutions were often staffed by the former political officers, such a change was often more cosmetic than real. Other than in Hungary (where "educational" tasks were transferred to line officers) and the Czech Republic, educational administrations have persisted in some form in the militaries of the FNSWP states. These administrations appear to no longer employ mostly former political officers, and in a seeming reaction to the previous indoctrination function, some of them have taken on the task of nationalistic education of the conscripts. The only reassuring aspect is that evidence suggests that sociopolitical education in the military is not particularly effective.<sup>14</sup> At best, it may strengthen the nationalistic leanings of some draftees.

<sup>14</sup>The communists' attempt proved a dismal failure. For other countries' unsuccessful experiments with sociopolitical education, see Roland Wakenhut, "Effects of Military Service on the Political Socialization of Draftees," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 5, No. 4, Summer 1979, pp. 626-641, and Kent Jennings and Gregory B. Markus, "The Effect of Military Service on Political Attitudes: A Panel Study," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 71, No. 1, March 1977, pp. 131-147.

In most of the FNSWP militaries, the suddenly unemployed former political officers were either transferred to other duties (such as the education departments) or dismissed. The fate of the political officers in the FNSWP armed forces illustrates the deeper problems brought about by the politicization of the militaries under the communist rule, the distrust this politicization has fostered between the military and the new political elites, and the problems that stem from the process of military reform.

There were many paths to the position of political officer. Often the path was no more than an advanced degree in Marxism, political connections, and few skills of some other kind. But sometimes the path was quite different. In an attempt to strengthen the prestige of the position, party officials sometimes asked highly regarded young line officers to perform a tour of duty as political officers. If an officer refused, his career would take a sudden nosedive. A refusal would also stamp him as politically unreliable, and he would encounter problems in whatever other career he chose. Not surprisingly, many officers agreed to serve. To consider such officers simply communist functionaries who do not belong in the military is to punish them for facing a moral dilemma with only two bad choices that the system as a whole imposed upon the population. Moreover, over time at least some of the political officers probably developed greater loyalty to the military than to the party. Finally, some line assignments entailed responsibility for party activity.

The new elites that came to power in the FNSWP states after 1989 generally did not distinguish between the various paths to the job of political officer, the sometimes thin line between political and line activities, or the possibility of divided loyalties. Ideally, each case merited individual consideration, but the more dominant tendency among the new elites was to brand as untrustworthy anyone who had served as a political officer or carried out political functions in the military. The tendency was most pronounced in Czechoslovakia (and continued in the Czech Republic) but it also surfaced in the other countries. Although understandable, especially in light of the background of the new elites, the view failed to take into account the nuances of the situation. Not many line officers in the FNSWP militaries shed tears over the dismissal or reassignment of the political officers, but the manner in which the action was often carried out contributed to the distrust between the new political elites and the

officer corps. The dismissals and transfers of the political officers fueled rumors of further vindictive purges of the officer corps as a whole.

**Military Counterintelligence.** Military counterintelligence was probably the institution most feared by line officers in the FNSWP militaries during the communist era. The reasons for such fears lay in the political monitoring role assigned to the institution by the communist regimes. In Western militaries, the task of military counterintelligence is to detect and counter hostile intelligence efforts and to ensure adequate procedures to prevent the loss of military secrets. Military counterintelligence played that role in the FNSWP militaries, but it was also a de facto secret mechanism for monitoring officer reliability. Operating covertly and keeping tabs on such things as an officer's acquaintances or church attendance patterns, the organization's essential arbitrariness had an intended intimidating effect upon line officers. An officer never knew who among his fellow officers and soldiers worked as an informer for military counterintelligence and might report some seemingly innocent remark he made during his off-duty hours. Organizationally, military counterintelligence formed a part of the interior ministry (the police) during the communist era.<sup>15</sup> As such, counterintelligence represented the secret police network in the military.

Because of its covert nature, the reform of military counterintelligence has been difficult in the FNSWP militaries. In the initial period after 1989, the military counterintelligence organizations were detached from the interior ministries and placed under the supervision of the defense ministries. However, because they usually came under the control of the General Staff, they paradoxically escaped major changes in the initial period of reform, even as their previous "hosts" (interior ministries) were the first to go through a reform process. Thus, many of the most discredited former secret policemen

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<sup>15</sup>In Romania, military counterintelligence formed a section of the Department of State Security, or the "Securitate" (secret police), which was separate from the interior ministry. The different organizational links demonstrate the essential Ceausescu clan (rather than communist party) control of the country, since the Securitate was in fact responsible to Ceausescu and not to the communist party, a setup similar to the Stalinist Soviet model. In Poland in the 1980s, military counterintelligence was not a part of the interior ministry but was directly subordinated to the minister of the interior personally.

continued to work in the military, a fact that led to scandals in some of the FNSWP countries. Eventually, most of the military counterintelligence organizations went through reorganizations (these varied in depth, depending on the country), which caused a substantial reduction in their size, replacement with conventional military counterintelligence organizations, and the setting up of regular military police forces.

Given its secret nature, one should be cautious about drawing conclusions regarding the extent of reform within the military counterintelligence services in the various FNSWP countries. The reform of military counterintelligence seems to have gone quite far in the former Czechoslovakia (and especially in the Czech Republic), with only a small percentage of the former secret policemen retained. Poland and Hungary too implemented plans aimed at a fundamental reorganization of military counterintelligence, though claims emerged in Poland that the organization had spied on Polish political figures until 1991 and that it had sabotaged some of the reforms of the armed forces in 1992.<sup>16</sup> After an early attempt to eliminate the organization altogether in Bulgaria by the first civilian defense minister, Dimitar Ludzhev, military counterintelligence appears to have regained its ability to function. Following the ouster of Ceausescu, the new Romanian leadership gave the military the task of reorganizing the Securitate. The Romanian military had no reason to be fond of the Securitate and appears to have carried out substantial changes. However, the overall impact of these changes remains unclear.

The reorganization of military counterintelligence in the FNSWP states also illustrates the pitfalls of politicizing normal military institutions.<sup>17</sup> There was little sympathy for the officers who had worked for military counterintelligence, but plans in some countries to abolish the organization completely (for example, in Bulgaria) sparked resistance on the grounds that some of the personnel actu-

<sup>16</sup>The claims were politically motivated, but they may contain some truth.

<sup>17</sup>"Normal" in this sense means institutions having counterparts in most (including Western) military organizations. A military counterintelligence organization is such an organization. On the other hand, an institution such as an MPA is not a "normal" one; it is found only in states controlled by communist regimes and is a specific product of communist-style control of the military.

ally did perform useful duties and that eliminating the organization altogether could place the security of the country at risk. The fundamental issue was whether some institutions were reformable or whether there was a need for a new start altogether.

In addition, once oversight of military counterintelligence organizations was transferred to the General Staff, institutional rivalries became a problem. For reasons of previous experience with the organization, the strong penchant for secrecy and security in the East European officer corps, and bureaucratic turf battles, the General Staff in many FNSWP countries was often reluctant to give up control. In some cases, such as in Bulgaria, control of military counterintelligence became an important issue in the rivalry between the risk-averse General Staff and a new civilian defense minister intent on quickly sweeping out the legacies of the communist era. Plans to subordinate military counterintelligence to the office of the defense minister led to a sharp dispute with the General Staff. The dispute was part of a larger conflict between the president and the defense minister over control of the military. The Bulgarian case was but one of several instances where efforts to reform military counterintelligence contributed to the distrust between the new political elites and the officer corps in the FNSWP states.

### **Establishing a New Form of Civil-Military Relations**

The elimination of communist party channels of control over the military disrupted the military's ability to articulate its institutional interests to the political authorities. During the communist era, the legislatures in the various FNSWP states acted as a rubber stamp. The real decisionmaking power was in the Central Committee of the communist party. Moreover, when it came to military matters of any importance, the real decisions were made by the Soviet regime in Moscow. Vesting genuine political power in the legislatures required new authority relations to be set up between the military and the main civilian institutions of political power—the legislatures and the offices of prime minister and president. In other words, the military had to be placed squarely under the control of the civilian bodies, and it had to operate as a part of the state apparatus.

In practical terms, this meant the establishment of full legislative oversight of the military and direct prime ministerial control over the

defense ministry, through its minister. Since the ministry of defense is a part of the government's apparatus, it is run by civilian administrators in democratic societies. The principle of civilian control underlies the arrangement: "[T]he ends of government policy are to be set by civilians; the military is limited to decisions about means [; and] it is for the civilian leadership to decide where the line between ends and means . . . is to be drawn."<sup>18</sup> Thus, civilian control does not extend directly to actual operational control over the armed forces, for that is vested in the command of the armed forces, usually the General Staff. But the General Staff executes the ministry's orders. The General Staff also generally has some subordinate links to the head of state—the president. This blueprint is usually accepted as a model for how a military is to function in a democratic society. Putting such a model into practice in the FNSWP states proved problematic for many reasons.

The process was implemented under exceedingly difficult circumstances, for the military and the political institutions had to operate in uncharted territory and reach agreement on fundamental budgeting and policy decisions under the guidance of communist-style constitutions that were not easily applicable to the new circumstances and blurred the delineation of authority over the armed forces. In addition, usually none of the sides had any experience in negotiating with each other and had to do so in conditions of deep distrust (for reasons outlined above).

A major problem in establishing a new form of civil-military relations was the previously narrow realm of civilian oversight of the military (a legacy of the close relationship between the communist party and the military). Whereas the communists had expended enormous efforts to control the military, the whole focus of the effort had been a negative one—namely, to make sure the military would not try to overthrow the communist regime and that the country would fulfill its obligations to the USSR by having its armed forces ready to fight alongside the Soviet military.<sup>19</sup> Anything not connected directly with

<sup>18</sup>Kenneth W. Kemp and Charles Hudlin, "Civil Supremacy over the Military: Its Nature and Limits," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Fall 1992, pp. 7–26.

<sup>19</sup>Christopher Donnelly, "Security and Defence Issues of the Former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe," NATO Headquarters, unpublished conference paper, September 1993, p. 1.

these two overall goals was outside the realm of civilian oversight. In practice, this meant that the uniformed military had a full monopoly on military affairs. In fact, the FNSWP militaries were largely un-integrated and autonomous institutions within their own countries; the ministries of defense were staffed completely by military personnel. In effect, each military operated as a "state within a state." This gave rise to a deep-seated institutional distrust of civilians, rigid ideas about the appropriate range of civilian "intrusion" into the military realm, and strong resistance to civilian input into military affairs.

Furthermore, as part of their Soviet-serving function, the militaries of the FNSWP countries had been subordinated to Soviet plans. Major planning, budgetary, and procurement decisions were passed on to the FNSWP militaries as directives from the General Staff in Moscow (sometimes rubber-stamped in meetings of the Warsaw Pact consultative committee) rather than from domestic political institutions in the East European countries themselves. The whole setup took a severe toll on the administrative structure of the FNSWP militaries, especially in their ministries of defense. For example, the ministries lacked strategic planning departments because all strategic planning took place in Moscow. In fact, the ministries of defense fulfilled functions related more to operational control of the armed forces than to the administration of a major state institution. When the FNSWP states regained their sovereignty, their military establishments were ill-prepared to carry out independent national defense planning and prepare budgets. They simply had not dealt with such issues before, and they were bewildered by the sudden necessity to do so in the face of inquiries from the legislatures.

The FNSWP militaries' function as adjunct forces to the Soviet military also had led them to take on the Soviet-style penchant for secrecy. This reinforced an already existing—precommunist—predisposition toward secrecy regarding military matters in the FNSWP states. Thus, during the era of communist regimes, virtually nothing concerning the military was discussed publicly, and anyone mentioning such issues could be accused of a security breach. Consequently, the military was not used to discussing "secrets" in the open and especially not with civilians or the media. Not surprisingly, the military brought at a minimum a lack of familiarity, and more often



an exaggerated fear and distrust, to any dealings with civilians on military and security matters.

The problems of adjustment faced by the military were paralleled by similar problems on the civilian side. Many of the new officials who came to power in the FNSWP states understood the need for the separation of the military from the communist party. However, some of their ideas about accomplishing the task seem to have had more to do with establishing control over the military by their own political party or movement than with providing a suitable institutional framework for the disengagement of the military from direct participation in politics. In effect, tendencies toward repoliticization of the military emerged in all of the FNSWP countries. Often, the repoliticization attempts were couched in terms of debates over the need to vet the officer corps for loyalty or over disputes on the need for purges of the military.<sup>20</sup> Of course, the very fact that the media and the parliaments of the FNSWP countries were openly debating the competence and loyalty of the officer corps was humbling, to say the least, to those militaries. The accusations undoubtedly undermined morale and strengthened many officers' distrust of the new civilian leaderships.

Due to the unclear delineation of authority over the armed forces (a legacy of communist constitutions, when the constitutional precepts were ignored in practice) the military often became an object of political infighting. Generally, the infighting took place between the offices of the president and the prime minister, though the opposition political parties in the legislature often contributed to the bitterness of the struggles in an effort to damage the government.

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<sup>20</sup>Eventually, full vetting took place only in the former Czechoslovakia (and it has continued in the Czech Republic), a fact that has much to do with the post-1968 Soviet-inspired vetting of the Czechoslovak officer corps and the perception that the post-1968 purge had left it the most pro-Soviet of all the FNSWP militaries (for more information on the initial vetting measures, see Thomas S. Szayna, *The Military in a Postcommunist Czechoslovakia*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, N-3412-USDP, 1992). A vetting process was considered in Poland but did not take place. High turnover, if not outright purges, at the upper ranks of the officer corps took place in all of the FNSWP countries (with the partial exception of Romania, which carried out substantial purges of officers of suspect loyalty in 1961-1971), so that by mid-1994, the general officer ranks in most of the FNSWP countries are much smaller and almost completely different in composition from just four years ago. The ranks of colonel and lieutenant colonel also show a deep turnover.

These conflicts have been most acute in Poland. They have their origin in ambiguities in the Polish constitution over who has control of the military. Under the interim ("little") constitution, the president is the commander in chief of the armed forces and the defense minister reports directly to the prime minister. However, in practice the prime minister has consulted the president in making his appointments for the interior, foreign, and defense ministries. This arrangement has led to contentious disputes between President Walesa and a succession of prime ministers. In 1992, for instance, the restructuring of the defense ministry became an issue between Walesa and the then minister of defense, Jan Parys. Based on the president's role as the supreme commander of the armed forces, and using the custom of "presidential" ministries to his advantage, Walesa courted the Polish General Staff and stymied Parys' efforts to push through his program of reforms. The dispute spilled out into the open in the spring of 1992 and eventually led to Parys' dismissal. The controversy died down during the tenure of the next Polish defense minister, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, in part because of Onyszkiewicz's personal style and good relations with Walesa. But the dispute flared up again in late 1994, as Walesa again exploited his ambiguous oversight responsibility over the armed forces to intervene in a conflict between the chief of staff and the defense minister, Piotr Kolodziejczyk. Encouraged by Walesa, in October 1994 the top commanders of the Polish armed forces expressed an open vote of no confidence in Kolodziejczyk. This action sparked a major internal political crisis and eventually led to Kolodziejczyk's dismissal and charges of politicization of the military on Walesa's part.

In Hungary, the transition process was also accompanied by the division of the defense ministry into a small administrative body and a large armed forces command where most of the actual power was vested. Since the president had the role of commander in chief, and since the armed forces command controlled the General Staff, the new government, led by Jozsef Antall, and with Lajos Fur as the defense minister, found itself stripped of much of its power of oversight of the military. It took vociferous debates in the legislature and a good deal of bad blood between the president, Arpad Goncz, and the prime minister before the constitutional court settled the issue in 1991 by ruling that the government indeed had the dominant say over the armed forces command.

A similar problem emerged in Bulgaria shortly after the anticommunist opposition formed a government in late 1991. The scope of control over the armed forces became a major issue of dispute between the president, Zhelyu Zhelev, and the prime minister, Filip Dimitrov, and contributed to the ouster of Dimitar Ludzhev, the first civilian defense minister. Ludzhev's successor, Alexander Staliyski, became so embroiled in the struggle over control of the armed forces that he brought civil-military relations in Bulgaria to a new nadir by attempting to retire most of the upper officer corps. The institutional rivalry between the president and the prime minister over responsibility for the armed forces was kept under control during the reign of the "government of experts," led by Lyuben Berov, but the root causes of the problem have not been eliminated, and they have continued to reappear.

For all of the reasons outlined above, far-reaching problems characterized civil-military relations in the initial postcommunist period. Making matters worse, the civilian authorities and military often had different priorities. The military wanted to establish effective channels of communication to the legislatures in order to enable it to continue to function and to safeguard the country's security in what it believed to be a rapidly shifting and dangerous international security environment. On the other hand, the civilian leaderships were initially more concerned to subordinate the military to civilian control and prevent it from becoming a center of opposition to the political changes. The mutual distrust was so high that it took some Western initiatives to start the process of communication between the new civilian leaderships and the military.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup>RAND played a part in this process, sponsoring conferences and workshops that brought together civilians and the military from the specific FNSWP states. See Keith W. Crane, Steven W. Popper, and Barbara A. Kliszewski, *Civil-Military Relations in a Multiparty Democracy: Report of a Conference Organized by the RAND Corporation and the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, R-3941-RC, August 1990; Ronald D. Asmus and Thomas S. Szayna, *Polish National Security Thinking in a Changing Europe: A Conference Report*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, R-4056-FF, 1991; and Thomas S. Szayna and James B. Steinberg, *Civil-Military Relations and National Security Thinking in Czechoslovakia: A Conference Report*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, R-4195-OSD/A/AF, 1992.

### Civilian Oversight and Control over the Armed Forces

While the legislatures in all of the FNSWP countries quickly established a measure of authority over the militaries through their power to appropriate the armed forces' budgets, the more direct forms of control—the appointment of civilian administrators to the defense ministries and the establishment of full parliamentary oversight of military activities—have proceeded at a much slower pace. The lack of qualified civilians has been the main problem, but inertia, other political priorities, and the precommunist traditions of the military running the defense ministry have contributed to the sometimes slow pace of “civilianization” of the defense ministry apparatus.

The process of appointment of civilian administrators associated with the new political elite to the defense ministries has varied from country to country. Hungary and Czechoslovakia acquired civilian defense ministers associated with the anticommunist opposition in May and October of 1990, respectively. The process was somewhat delayed in Poland due to the incomplete nature of the Polish transition.<sup>22</sup> Two Solidarity activists were appointed deputy defense ministers in April 1990, but the first civilian defense minister with no links to the communist regime was appointed only in December 1991. In Bulgaria, the first civilian defense minister from the anti-communist opposition was appointed in November 1991, after the parliamentary elections in October of that year finally ousted the successor party to the communists from power. In Romania, a civilian deputy defense minister was appointed in March 1993, and a civilian defense minister was appointed a year later. The two successor states to Czechoslovakia have had civilians in charge of their defense ministries. However, in Slovakia the first defense minister was a retired military officer. In March 1994, a “full-fledged” civilian was appointed to the position of defense minister.

<sup>22</sup>The Mazowiecki government—Poland's first noncommunist government—came about as a result of a pact between Solidarity and the communist authorities in the summer of 1989. In order to allay Soviet fears about the transition, the communists were given four posts in the Mazowiecki government, including the ministry of defense. Mazowiecki was able to appoint his own defense minister only in July 1990.

The new civilian defense ministers took over under extremely difficult circumstances. Facing distrustful and often outright hostile subordinates and subject to pressure from their political superiors, it is not surprising that the experience so far of civilian administrators in charge of the defense ministries in the FNSWP countries has been mixed. A brief survey of the various countries underscores this problem.

In Hungary, the first civilian defense minister, Lajos Fur (a member of the Hungarian Democratic Forum, or MDF, the main coalition partner of Hungary's government between May 1990 and May 1994), was until mid-1993 one of his party's leaders. Combining the two positions caused political problems internationally. Several of Fur's speeches regarding the protection of Hungarian minorities abroad appealed to Hungarian nationalism and were aimed at a domestic audience in his capacity as a party leader. However, they provoked alarm in neighboring countries because of Fur's position as defense minister. In Bulgaria, some evidence suggests that the first civilian defense minister, Dimitar Ludzhev (associated with the UDF), tried to create his own power base in the armed forces and took liberties with the law (especially regarding the export of arms).

Many of the new civilian defense ministers were also not very effective. The first Czechoslovak civilian defense minister, Lubos Dubrovsky, proved unable to deal with ethnic tensions in the military. The first Polish civilian defense minister, Jan Parys, alienated the officer corps through his intemperate comments about its loyalty and his criticism of President Walesa, which led to his dismissal in May 1992. The second Bulgarian civilian defense minister, Alexander Staliyski, proved completely ineffective for similar reasons. In addition, as mentioned earlier, many of the civilian administrators associated with the anticommunist opposition became embroiled in bureaucratic turf battles with the General Staff and the Presidency.

The main reason for the limited presence and effectiveness of civilian authorities in the FNSWP state defense ministries has been the lack of qualified military experts among the anticommunist opposition. The situation stems from the conditions surrounding the military during the communist era. Since no public debate on security and military issues was allowed, there was no need to develop a cadre of

journalists or academic specialists who were knowledgeable about security issues. The appointment to high positions of personnel who lacked the necessary skills and expertise and quickly "demonstrated their ignorance both of military affairs in general and of the management of armed forces in particular"<sup>23</sup> reinforced the distrust between the military and its civilian superiors and sometimes even led to open contempt on the part of the officer corps toward the civilians in the defense ministry.

Romania has largely avoided such conflicts and tensions, partly because civilian control of the defense ministry was established relatively late in the transition process. (A civilian defense minister was not appointed until March 1994.) The Romanian model has the advantage of retaining military efficiency and keeping the military out of political infighting at a formative stage of the transition process. At the same time, however, it reduces the degree of actual civilian control over the military.

Recently, moreover, civilian control of the military has actually declined in some FNSWP countries. Following the electoral success of the postcommunist parties in Poland and Hungary in 1993–1994, retired military were appointed as ministers of defense in both countries. The number of civilians in subordinate policymaking positions in the defense ministries of both countries has also declined. As a result, the earlier differences between the central European and the Romanian patterns of military reform have narrowed.

In short, to date (late 1994) the principle of full civilian control over the armed forces has not been fully extended to any of the FNSWP countries. Parliamentary control over the FNSWP militaries is partial and indirect. Parliaments cannot properly evaluate the defense plans submitted to them by the General Staff because they lack expertise. The presence of retired military in the parliaments of the FNSWP states does not change the situation dramatically, since such personnel have generally not offered alternatives to the plans submitted by the military but instead have acted as spokesmen for the

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<sup>23</sup>Christopher Donnelly, "Security and Defence Issues of the Former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe," NATO Headquarters, unpublished conference paper, September 1993, p. 1.

plans. Mechanisms for effective parliamentary oversight of the militaries also are lacking. Because of frequent changes of government in most of the FNSWP states, there has been little continuity of reform measures over a period of time necessary for the reforms to become implemented.

Within the defense ministries, control by civilian administrators is more of a formality than a reality. It remains superficial and often does not extend much below the deputy minister or state secretary level. Most civilian appointees do not have deep or detailed knowledge of defense issues, and they remain dependent on the military for advice and analysis. There is no "counterelite" or cadre of civilian specialists who can challenge the military's views and provide an alternative viewpoint, such as exists in the United States and many countries of Western Europe. This inhibits the establishment of effective civilian control over the military.

The absence of a cadre of civilian defense specialists also poses problems from the perspective of the military. Many of the civilian appointees simply lack the expertise to understand the complex defense issues the military deals with. The military sees these civilians as well-meaning amateurs who cannot be trusted to deal with important defense issues because they lack sufficient technical knowledge. The military's reaction is to keep a tight hold on information rather than share it, to hunker down and wall itself off against what it sees as civilian "intrusion" into its legitimate sphere of interest. This breeds an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion that reinforces the barriers between the civilian and military authorities rather than breaking them down.

## **MILITARY-TECHNICAL ISSUES**

### **Refocusing the Strategic Orientation**

Since the Warsaw Pact acted as a tool designed to harness the military potential of the non-Soviet member states for Soviet ends, the structure and the strategic orientation of the FNSWP militaries (with the exception of Romania) reflected their status as subordinate components of a system led and dominated by the USSR. Thus, the FNSWP states lacked a military doctrine of their own and the Warsaw Pact doctrine amounted to a set of concepts that ostensibly governed

the use of their forces.<sup>24</sup> Because of the pre-emptive and offensive orientation of the Warsaw Pact, the various FNSWP countries had specific tasks as part of the coalition offensive against NATO.<sup>25</sup> Thus, Polish forces planned for offensive actions against West Germany and Denmark, Czechoslovak forces planned for an offensive against West Germany, Hungarian forces had the task of invading Austria and Italy, and Bulgarian forces were to engage in offensive operations against Turkey and Greece. Showing some distrust toward its allies, the Soviet General Staff did not share with its FNSWP counterparts the plans for the use of Soviet forces, though the Soviets insisted on detailed knowledge and the right of approval for the FNSWP plans on sectors assigned by the Soviets to those militaries.

In practical terms, the subordination of the FNSWP militaries to the Soviet alliance structure resulted in a tank-heavy, offensive force structure, a logistics system designed to support forces taking part in combat operations on foreign territory, and a concentration of forces in areas closest to jumping-off points. The military district system in each FNSWP country reflected the offensive plans. Furthermore, their status as adjunct forces to the Soviet army led the FNSWP militaries to have severely limited capabilities for independent action. Only Romania, because of its less important geographical location to the Soviet Union and its maverick status within the Pact, had a territorial defense orientation and a genuine military doctrine of its own.

The collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the renationalization of the FNSWP states' foreign and security policies necessitated a shift away from an anti-NATO orientation and toward national defense (and an implicit perception of a Soviet and then Russian threat), but the infrastructure built up over four decades has a distinct anti-NATO orientation that will take many years and substantial funds to change. All the FNSWP countries have plans (in various stages of

<sup>24</sup>The move toward a "defensive doctrine" in 1987, associated with Gorbachev's reform of the Soviet military, represented an intermediate step, in that the FNSWP countries were allowed some leeway within a tightly defined coalition doctrine. For an examination of the level of independence the move provided, see Thomas S. Szayna, *The Military in a Postcommunist Poland*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, N-3309-USDP, 1991.

<sup>25</sup>For an illuminating review of the Warsaw Pact plans, based on East German archival sources, see Lothar Ruehl, "Offensive Defence in the Warsaw Pact," *Survival*, Vol. 33, No. 5, September/October 1991, pp. 442-450.



implementation) for the redeployment of forces more evenly throughout their territories. Czechoslovakia had progressed quite far in this redeployment by the time of its breakup. Hungary also has gradually redeployed its troops. Poland and Bulgaria have made some progress, but a lack of funds has hampered the implementation of redeployment plans. Romanian forces have not needed to redeploy because, as noted, Romania had a territorial defense system prior to 1989. Ironically, while the Polish government perceives its greatest threat as coming from the east, Poland's eastern border remains sparsely defended due to a lack of funds to carry out the redeployment. The creation of a fourth (Krakow) Polish military district in the southeastern quadrant of the country has proceeded at an extremely slow pace; three years after the approval of plans to set it up, the district remains mostly on paper. Similarly, Bulgaria's forces are still concentrated in the southeast, despite the real potential for a breakout of hostilities on its western (Serbian) border.

A specific problem stemming from the anti-NATO configuration of the FNSWP forces has arisen in the area of air defense. The previous, unified Warsaw Pact air defense system was disbanded with the end of the Pact, opening up gaps in radar and SAM coverage, which in effect rendered the national air defense systems of the FNSWP states almost useless. For example, Polish radar and SAM coverage is concentrated in western and northwestern Poland. It is an inefficient proposition to move the components to the east, for reasons of cost and the obsolescence of the SAMs. Similarly, Bulgarian and Hungarian radar and SAM coverage of their borders with Serbia had to be enlarged at considerable expense, while Slovakia has had to build its air defense system from scratch.

All the military-technical problems outlined above hamper attempts to put into effect the changes in national security concepts adopted by the new governments in the FNSWP states. Moreover, there are other, less visible, problems in the development of new defense concepts. The legacy of over 40 years of Soviet domination has persisted and is likely to persist in an intellectual form. The exclusive training of each FNSWP country's officer corps in Soviet thought about tactical and operational concepts will color any autonomous central European or Balkan military thinking for some time (this is already evi-

dent in the military doctrines and defensive plans prepared by the FNSWP states since 1989).<sup>26</sup> Although all of the countries have prepared defense concepts that envision a lighter, defensive, territorially oriented armed forces supplanted by a core of "rapid deployment units"<sup>27</sup> that rely on an ever-increasing proportion of professional soldiers rather than conscripts, the concepts continue to be underpinned by Soviet-style ideas on warfare, with their emphasis on lines and echelons. Officers from the FNSWP countries have begun to study in military academies in the NATO countries, but it will take a number of years before the deeply ingrained Soviet combat concepts are replaced by concepts prevalent among NATO armies.

### The Material State of the Armed Forces

Another legacy of the Warsaw Pact is in the equipment used by the FNSWP countries. For reasons of compatibility and standardization, virtually all equipment was made in the USSR or locally under Soviet license. (Again, Romania was a partial exception to that rule.) Making matters worse for the FNSWP countries, the Soviets distrusted their allies and often refused to sell them the most advanced equipment. In addition, the more relaxed international situation since 1985, the presence of serious domestic economic problems, as well as incremental gains in leeway vis-à-vis the Soviets (which meant that some countries that did not feel particularly attached to the anti-NATO plans, such as Hungary or Poland, refused to purchase the armaments that the Soviets "recommended") led the FNSWP countries to forgo some weapons procurement. The net effect has been a growing obsolescence of their armaments.

The economic disruptions and far-reaching budget shortages that came with the change from a state economy to a market economy in the FNSWP countries have led to drastic cuts in the military budgets

<sup>26</sup>There have been substantial U.S. efforts to assist the FNSWP militaries in thinking about defense of their states. For one example, see Charles T. Kelley, Jr., Daniel B. Fox, and Barry A. Wilson, "A First Look at Defense Options for Poland," in Paul K. Davis (ed.), *New Challenges for Defense Planning: Rethinking How Much Is Enough*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, MR-400-RC, 1994, pp. 451-476.

<sup>27</sup>One of the specific uses of these forces will be for multilateral peacekeeping operations.

and the consequent almost complete lack of any weapons modernization programs since 1989. As defense expenditures dropped by over half (in real terms) between 1989 and 1993,<sup>28</sup> procurement took the brunt of the drop.<sup>29</sup> Thus, in Czechoslovakia the percentage of procurement within the defense budget dropped from almost 35 percent in 1989 to less than 5 percent in 1992. In Bulgaria, procurement plummeted from 60 percent of the defense budget in 1989 to under 10 percent in 1992. Since procurement has leveled off at under 10 percent of the defense budgets in the FNSWP countries, the funds available supply only enough to purchase the most urgently needed spare parts. To make matters worse, all of the FNSWP states have faced considerable expenses entailed by the need to destroy many of their heavy weapons because of CFE-mandated cuts. Thus, because of budgetary constraints, no major program of armaments acquisition in any of the FNSWP states is planned in the near future.

As a result of the earlier policies and the budgetary problems associated with the move away from a centrally planned economy, the weapons fielded by the armed forces of the FNSWP countries are either outright obsolete or obsolescent (the T-54/55-series tanks and MiG-21 aircraft provide the clearest examples). Only a few weapon systems in the FNSWP armed forces can be considered truly modern. One should note, however, an important caveat. The armaments of the FNSWP militaries are obsolete if compared with those of the most modern armed forces in the world, such as the United States or Germany. If compared to some of the second-tier NATO countries, such as Spain or Greece, the armed forces of the FNSWP states (and especially the central European states) are not that much worse off.

The previous equipping of the FNSWP militaries exclusively with Soviet arms means that dependence on Russia will continue for a number of years, since the primary source of spare parts will be Russia and, to a lesser extent, Ukraine. Domestic production of "Soviet" armaments under license and spare part purchases from alternative suppliers solve some of the problem, but not all of it.

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<sup>28</sup>Romania again provides an exception, largely because of the lower levels of its defense burden compared to other FNSWP states before 1989.

<sup>29</sup>For a discussion of the drop in defense budgets in the initial period, see Keith Crane, *The Economic Implications of Reductions in Military Budgets and Force Levels in Eastern Europe*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, N-3208-USDP, 1991.

In some areas, the problem of continued dependency on Russia has actually worsened. The obsolete armaments, the perception of vulnerability in the face of new security threats, the extremely limited funds for procurement, and political obstacles to the purchase of Western-manufactured weapons have led several FNSWP states to continue purchasing Russian armaments. Foremost among such examples is the Hungarian acquisition of MiG-29 aircraft from Russia in 1993. Although the Hungarian leadership would have preferred to buy Western equipment, it was either too expensive or unsuitable for Hungarian needs. Thus, the leadership accepted a Russian offer to swap pre-1989 Soviet debts to Hungary for the aircraft, even though the acquisition increased Hungarian dependence on Russian spare parts and slowed its ability to make its armed forces more compatible with NATO forces.<sup>30</sup> Slovakia entered into a similar deal with Russia.

Only the Czech Republic has categorically rejected the further acquisition of any Russian-manufactured weapons. Indeed, the Czech government has attempted to decrease the level of dependence on Russia through decisions that are questionable from the point of military preparedness.<sup>31</sup> The Czech decision stems from the proclivities of the current (Klaus) government to do nothing that would impede its integration with Western security structures. In addition, the relatively greater security of the Czech Republic from outside threats has allowed the leadership to decrease dependence on Russia.<sup>32</sup>

The unfavorable situation regarding armaments is exacerbated by shortages of fuel and ammunition that have hit especially hard the technologically advanced branches of the armed forces, such as the air force and the navy. For example, pilots in all the FNSWP air

<sup>30</sup>For background on the transaction, see Alfred A. Reisch, "Hungary, Russian MiG-29s and Regional Balance," *RFE/RL Research Report*, July 7, 1993, pp. 3-14.

<sup>31</sup>The Czech air force has announced plans to phase out its most modern aircraft, the MiG-29, and replace it with a domestically produced jet trainer. The Czech decision seems to prepare the ground for the acquisition of Western-made aircraft.

<sup>32</sup>The Czech Republic faces few external threats that can be hypothesized in the near and medium term. Whereas the other FNSWP states face risks of local conflicts on their borders, even that possibility appears remote in the Czech case. The sense of greater security has allowed the Czechs to be less concerned about military preparedness than the other FNSWP states.

forces have less than 100 hours flying time per year (and often considerably less than that, as low as 30), an amount that many U.S. Air Force pilots consider dangerous for maintaining proficiency.<sup>33</sup> The shortages and the lack of funds have led to the virtual halt of military maneuvers in the region. Finally, the CFE-mandated cuts in the length of service of conscripts in the FNSWP countries (complementing the trend toward lessening the military's role in society) mean that the conscripts have less time to learn to operate the weapons. Consequently, not only is the equipment largely obsolete, the proficiency in using it has declined.

### Problems of Cohesion

The growth of opportunities in the private sector, the extremely low pay for junior and noncommissioned officers (in effect causing most NCOs to live below the poverty line), the dissatisfaction over the slow pace of military reforms, and the decreased prestige of the military (except in Poland and Romania) have all caused a massive outflow of junior officers and NCOs. Also, the General Staffs of all the FNSWP states have resisted tenaciously (and often successfully) the attempts to cut the numbers of mid-level and senior officers.<sup>34</sup> These two trends have resulted in severe personnel imbalances and the phenomenon of majors leading platoons in some of the FNSWP countries. Although the extent of the problem varies from country to country, all of the armed forces have been affected, leading to discipline problems and a reduction in combat effectiveness.

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<sup>33</sup>The rate of accidents involving aircraft of the Romanian air force reached alarming levels in 1993–1994. From January through October 1994, the Romanian air force lost 16 aircraft, including nine of the aging MiG-21 interceptors. The spate of accidents led to the grounding of the aircraft in October 1994. Romanian defense officials charged that these accidents were related to budget cuts, which had forced cutbacks in the number of training hours for Romanian pilots.

<sup>34</sup>In this sense, the perceived institutional interests of General Staffs in having a large officer corps have intertwined with the tensions in civil-military relations. The typical General Staff has objected to the plans prepared by its ministry of defense to cut the number of officers by introducing the issue into the squabbles between the president and the prime minister over control of the armed forces. Consequently, the president has often taken the General Staff's position on the issue. In Bulgaria, a deputy defense minister, Boyko Noev, was forced to resign in April 1994 because of such an issue.

In a similar vein, the overall morale level of the troops has suffered. As the media has become largely independent and free in the FNSWP states, it has publicized many of the problems of soldiers' daily life, such as the widespread and brutal hazing practices. Some of the problems have origins in the Soviet style of training and command (for example, discouraging individual initiative and emphasizing authoritarian rather than libertarian principles of behavior). Other problems are related to the budgetary woes and the often inadequate living conditions of the soldiers. The end result has been an increase in draft-dodging, a popular image of the conscript's tour of duty as akin to a prison term, and high suicide rates among conscripts.

The symbolic gestures adopted by all of the FNSWP militaries that stress their national roots do not change the often grim realities of a tour of duty for a conscript, the limited defense awareness among the population, and the reduced prestige of the military. The problems associated with prestige of the military and troop morale have been worst in the FNSWP states with the most consistent antimilitary feelings. The Czech Republic stands out in this respect as a country with deeply ingrained pacifist tendencies, but all the FNSWP countries (including even those with supposed martial traditions, such as Poland) have experienced an increase in such sentiment.

The technical, material, and prestige problems, combined with some dissatisfaction over the pace of reforms, initially led to the spontaneous rise of organizations, usually made up of junior officers, that aimed to act as pressure groups in favor of faster reforms. Often calling for depoliticization and "decommunization," these organizations have further weakened the cohesion of the FNSWP militaries. In Czechoslovakia, several such organizations emerged; one of them, the Association of Slovak Soldiers, actively promoted ethnic tension within the military, while another, the Free Legion, engineered the removal of a defense minister. Perhaps the most dangerous phenomenon took place in Poland, when two defense ministers (Parys and Szeremetiew, the latter an acting defense minister) showed favoritism to such an organization, Viritim, in effect bypassing official lines of hierarchy in the military. CADA in Romania played a more useful role in that it resisted the attempts of politicians to politicize the military again. The Rakovski Legion in Bulgaria, after engaging in a bitter fight with the first civilian defense minister, was transformed

into a more mainstream professional organization. The Hungarian Soldiers' Interest Protection Union also had more of a professional organization quality about it, although it criticized the military leadership on numerous occasions. Many of the organizations had a transitional nature, with some disappearing after a while, some being coopted, and others transforming into mainstream military unions. However, no matter what their orientation, the very formation and activity of these organizations within the military points to problems of cohesion and indicates a deep division between the junior and the more senior officers.

### CONCLUSIONS

The collapse of communist rule and the systemic reforms that followed in the FNSWP countries caused major disruptions in the armed forces of these states. Dealing with the legacy of the communist era—the previous close relationship between the communist regimes and the militaries and the Soviet-serving function of the FNSWP armed forces—has been the fundamental challenge for the new leaderships.

In the realm of civil-military relations, the pattern of civilian control over the military exercised by the communist regimes has collapsed, but new and effective channels of civilian control by the new democratic regimes have yet to solidify. The militaries in FNSWP states have an unintegrated and somewhat autonomous status that does not correspond to the usual position of armed forces in a democratic society. These militaries have a core of a highly professional officer corps and limited direct civilian oversight over them. The establishments tend to be risk averse and to favor incremental changes, and their adherence to such a stance in the face of governmental pressures for faster change has caused problems in civil-military relations. Although civil-military relations vary from country to country, they are characterized (with the partial exception of Romania) by distrust and tension.

Thus, although fears about the level of communist influence within the FNSWP militaries are no longer relevant, the absence of a qualified cadre of civilian defense specialists presents a fundamental obstacle to full civilian control. Until this deficiency is rectified, civil-

military relations will be conflictual and civilian control will remain largely superficial.

This conclusion does not mean that the militaries pose a danger to the continuation of the political and economic reforms being implemented in the FNSWP states since 1989. Despite some very real problems, the armed forces in all of the FNSWP countries seem to accept fully the principle of their subordination to civilians. Tensions revolve around the extent of the subordination—a normal process of bargaining in an emerging democratic political system.<sup>35</sup> The tensions do not mean that the military poses a threat in the short term to the democratically elected governments. Only in the long term and in cases of severe and continuing political and economic crisis would this likely be the case. Under such circumstances, the military could come to perceive a threat to the security of the state that could lead it to intervene politically.

As regards military-technical issues, the legacies of the Warsaw Pact and the costs associated with the transition since 1989 mean that the FNSWP militaries have largely obsolete or obsolescent equipment that is not well-suited to the new tasks they will be facing. However, they have few near-term options for changing this state of affairs. In addition, each country's armed forces face substantial internal cohesion problems for which there are no quick remedies. In short, the FNSWP countries face an array of potential threats, and they must overcome these with smaller and weaker armed forces that are beset by serious internal problems. If one assesses the performance potential of a military unit as a product of several characteristics, namely "tactical proficiency, operability of equipment, adequacy of logistical support, and the psychological readiness of its personnel,"<sup>36</sup> none of the FNSWP militaries can be expected to perform in an outstanding manner. Indeed, their performance would probably range from poor to satisfactory, at best.

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<sup>35</sup>It is worth keeping in mind that the democratization process in Latin America has witnessed a similar period of bargaining. See David Pion-Berlin, "Military Autonomy and Emerging Democracies in South America," *Comparative Politics*, October 1992, pp. 83-102.

<sup>36</sup>Faris R. Kirkland, Paul T. Bartone, and David H. Marlowe, "Commanders' Priorities and Psychological Readiness," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 19, No. 4, Summer 1993, pp. 579-598.



Spokesmen in all of the FNSWP militaries claim that the disruptions during the last five years have not affected their ability to defend their countries. They do so because they cannot openly say otherwise, both in terms of keeping their own jobs and for reasons of national security. Perceptions are an important aspect of deterrence, and every state tries to present an image of a reliable military. However, the reality is probably quite different. As one analyst put it, "in general the armed forces [of the FNSWP states] would not be capable of taking the field in any coherent manner against a modern enemy."<sup>37</sup> With the exception of the elite units and with some variance depending on the country, the observation probably holds true for most of, if not all, the FNSWP militaries.

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<sup>37</sup>Chris Donnelly, "Security and Defence Issues of the Former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe," NATO Headquarters, unpublished conference paper, September 1993, p. 2.

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**IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES**

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The United States has a keen interest in the evolution of civil-military relations and the progress of military reform in the FNSWP states for a number of reasons, related mainly to U.S. support for the overall political transition of the states to well-functioning representative democracies. Such a transition is one of the key goals of U.S. policy toward Europe.<sup>1</sup> A successful transition will remove a potential crisis area on NATO's borders. It is also a prerequisite for the eventual integration of the FNSWP countries into the current Western economic and security structures.

The establishment of effective civil-military relations in the FNSWP states forms an important component of the overall political transition. By definition, the FNSWP states will not complete the transition process until they develop stable, routinized, and nonadversarial civil-military relations in which the military accepts full civilian control and feels that its corporate interests are well served.

The state of the armed forces of the FNSWP countries is of direct interest to the United States and to NATO in view of the consistent U.S. policy pronouncements and an emerging commitment that the integration of at least some of these states into NATO is no longer a

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<sup>1</sup>It is beyond the scope of this report to discuss the validity of the linkage between a successful transition to liberal democratic political systems in the former communist countries and increased security for all of Europe. A substantial literature already exists on the topic. For one well-argued example, see Daniel N. Nelson, "Democracy, Markets and Security in Eastern Europe," *Survival*, Vol. 35, No. 2, Summer 1993, pp. 156-171.

question of "if" but of "when" and "how."<sup>2</sup> No longer adversaries but partners and potential allies, the FNSWP countries' armed forces need to be assessed through the prism of their ability to provide a deterrent to aggression and their level of compatibility with the NATO militaries.

### THE PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE PROGRAM

In this context, NATO's Partnership for Peace (PFP) program aims at a much greater interaction between NATO and the FNSWP states' militaries. A specific subpoint here is the cooperation in the immediate future in the realm of peacekeeping envisioned through the PFP. Despite some major problems with their armed forces, the FNSWP states have considerable military potential, and their governments are quite willing to provide forces to take part in peacekeeping operations alongside the United States and NATO.

Within the perspective of extensive interaction through the PFP and cooperation between U.S. and FNSWP militaries in the near term, the United States needs to pursue a policy of acquiring maximum gains from the partnership. Maximizing the number and availability of FNSWP peacekeeping forces that would serve alongside U.S. forces is one such goal. At the same time, the United States needs to ensure that cooperation under the PFP advances the long-term goal of eventual NATO membership for at least some of the FNSWP states. Both sets of goals are closely related and mutually reinforcing.<sup>3</sup>

PFP provides a means of self-selection for countries that wish to engage in a security relationship with the United States and NATO. However, the cooperation envisioned under the PFP entails substantial costs to the FNSWP states. There are costs in making some of their equipment compatible with NATO's in crucial areas, such as communications. There are also costs entailed in bilateral staff talks,

<sup>2</sup>See President Clinton's remarks to the Polish Sejm, *Press Release*, Office of the Press Secretary, Washington, D.C.: The White House, July 7, 1994, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>It is beyond the scope of this report to examine the reasons for and against the integration of the formerly communist states of Europe into NATO. For a recent argument, see Ronald D. Asmus, Richard L. Kugler, and F. Stephen Larrabee, "Building a New NATO," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 4, September-October 1993, pp. 28-40.

technical exchanges, officer training, joint exercises, and a host of other contacts. The extremely low defense budgets and lack of resources in the FNSWP countries (both costs of the overall political transition) suggest that the United States and other NATO countries should continue and widen the program of sharing some costs of the expanded cooperation with the FNSWP states. Matching the FNSWP state funds appropriated toward implementation of the PFP provides concrete support to these countries, advances the pace of PFP cooperation, and offers good payoffs to the United States.

The cooperation envisioned in PFP will advance the long-term goal of integration in a number of ways. Participation in joint exercises will familiarize the FNSWP militaries with NATO operational planning procedures. The setting up of units that can participate in peacekeeping operations alongside U.S. units will result in closer harmonization of the FNSWP force structures with those of NATO. Although important on its own, the cooperation through PFP will have an even greater significance over the long term in drawing the FNSWP militaries close to those of NATO.

At the same time, the United States should actively shape PFP to help prospective members prepare for membership by setting "performance standards" that they would be encouraged to meet. The performance standards would be targets rather than prerequisites for membership. As the candidate members made progress toward meeting the standards, they would increasingly be transformed into "NATO-like" countries.

Different performance standards should exist for candidate and non-candidate members. For prospective candidate members, performance standards should reflect the end goal of full integration in the Alliance. They should be geared toward putting these countries on a course to help them eventually participate in the full spectrum of NATO missions—i.e., territorial defense, peace support, and, potentially, out-of-area operations under Article 4.

For noncandidate members, on the other hand, the Alliance should develop a different set of performance standards that were not oriented toward full integration but instead designed to encourage these countries to cooperate with and participate in military activities with NATO, e.g., peacekeeping.

Setting such differentiated criteria does not preclude that at a later point some noncandidate PFP members could become candidate members if those countries and NATO decide such a step is in their mutual interest.

### **PERSONNEL TRAINING**

With the goal of supporting the overall transition process in the FNSWP states in mind, the United States can take a number of steps designed to improve civil-military relations in these countries and strengthen the capabilities of their armed forces in terms of both their ability to defend their sovereignty and their participation alongside the United States in multilateral operations. The realm of personnel training is perhaps the most important area where the United States can make a long-term impact that would serve the interests of both sides. Specific recommendations in this realm follow.

#### **Civilian Defense Specialists**

In order to encourage the establishment of genuine civilian control and to change the unintegrated and somewhat autonomous status of the militaries, the United States needs to assist the FNSWP states in creating a cadre of civilian defense specialists that would provide an alternative viewpoint on defense and security matters—an area that is now a virtual monopoly of the military. The creation of such a cadre will strengthen civilian control over the military and make the military fully accountable to the elected civilian authorities.

What is called for is a large-scale, well-funded program to train civilian specialists who can understand defense issues, evaluate skillfully the defense concepts prepared by the military, and supply alternative assessments and judgments. U.S. policymakers need to consider launching a major effort to train such a cadre of defense experts from the FNSWP states. The goal should be to produce a cadre of well-qualified defense experts—in effect, a permanent civil service—that will remain in government regardless of which party is in power.

In addition, the United States should launch a broad-gauged effort to attract students from several major parties in each country, not just the party that happens to be in power. The goal should be to create a

core of skilled defense experts in each of the major political parties or movements in all of the FNSWP states. With several groups of experts present there would be no dramatic break in case of change of governments, nor would a new leadership need to resort to on-the-job training in the defense realm. In addition, the presence of experts in a number of parties would strengthen the legislature's ability to evaluate defense proposals and, ultimately, would lead to a healthy debate on defense issues between groups of experts rather than rhetorical sloganeering.

One possibility for addressing the lack of civilian defense expertise in the FNSWP states would be to establish a special exchange program to train defense analysts at U.S. universities and research institutes—a type of Fulbright Program for civilian defense experts from the FNSWP states. These exchange programs, however, need to be long-term, sustained efforts. They should involve degree programs requiring a year or two of graduate study rather than short-term “crash courses” of a week or two. Such short-term courses have some utility but often result in little more than “military tourism.” They are no substitute for a program of rigorous, sustained study.

These exchange programs could be complemented by internships on congressional committees dealing with defense matters, such as the Senate and House Armed Services Committees. Such internships would give students first-hand practical knowledge and experience in dealing with defense issues as well as an opportunity to see how such issues are dealt with in Western democracies. The students could bring this experience back home and apply it—or adapt it—to their own environment. However, to be genuinely effective, such internships would need to last at least nine months to a year.

Another approach to the problem would be for the United States to help establish a system of national defense colleges in the individual FNSWP countries. These colleges, with at least some NATO faculty, would offer courses to both civilians and military. However, in-country training is not as effective as training in the United States. It should be seen as a complement to, not a substitute for, training abroad.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Many of the guidelines suggested for U.S. assistance to the FNSWP states in the economic realm are directly applicable to the defense and security sphere. See Steven W.

Although the FNSWP countries face shortages in all areas of civilian expertise concerning defense policy and management and oversight of the military, several areas stand out as especially important. They lie in the realm of defense resource management, and include such tasks as personnel administration, finance, and planning and budgeting. For example, without anyone to do cost analysis of the defense plans prepared by the General Staff, the civilian administrators in the ministries of defense, as well as the governments and legislatures, lack the means to make informed choices. The dearth of trained personnel, combined with the institutional problem of non-routinized procedures for the evaluation and approval of defense budgets (a result of the emerging nature of the political systems in the FNSWP states), is a major obstacle to a more optimal determination of needs and a more efficient distribution of scarce resources.

### Officer Training

There is also a need to rethink the Western-style training of officers from the FNSWP countries, since the impact of the current efforts has been limited. These officers are the most likely to be involved in any joint peacekeeping operations alongside the United States, and if the PFP cooperation is to take off, the numbers of these officers need to grow substantially. For example, English-language training is a basic prerequisite for any joint operation. The officers trained in the United States have an almost uniformly positive experience from their stay. Over and above the real skills they bring back to their countries, they develop an awareness of the way the U.S. armed forces function in society. It is this experience—which also has implications for the development of civil-military relations in the FNSWP states—that is crucial. In this sense, officer training represents a long-term U.S. investment in the future of the FNSWP militaries.

So far, only a handful of officers have had the opportunity to study in the United States. Their small numbers mean that they return to defense establishments where their new skills and training are ig-

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Popper, *Western Governmental Assistance to Eastern Europe: The First Steps*, Santa Monica, CA: RAND, N-3255-AF/AID, 1991.

nored or not adequately utilized. The impact of the training is thus lost or marginal. There are a number of reasons for this.

One of the problems is the frequent changes of governments in the FNSWP countries. As the postcommunist parties have gained political power in almost every country in the region, Western-trained officers have at times become targets of open suspicion from other officers (still overwhelmingly Soviet- or home-trained) and the new administrators associated with the postcommunist parties. Part of the reason is the flow of personnel associated with the former communist parties back into the defense ministries. Political instability is part of the transition process, and there is little the United States can do to change this in the short term, but it can act to diminish the negative consequences for the officers it has trained. The principle to keep in mind is to increase the number of such officers rapidly. As greater numbers of Western-trained FNSWP officers return to their countries, they will no longer be seen as "fish out of water," and the problem will gradually be reduced.

To speed up the process, the United States can expand the officer training programs. While continuing the programs that bring FNSWP officers to study for several years at U.S. military academies, U.S. policymakers need to give serious thought to ways of reaching large numbers of the officer corps through a "shallow but wide" approach. Such an approach would entail intensive short-term courses at U.S. institutes. In addition, the Marshall Center in Germany could be utilized to reach a large number of officers in a cost-effective manner. Finally, bringing a FNSWP officer to a U.S. base and having him "shadow" his U.S. counterpart to see how he performs his duties may be quite instructive. Whatever the means, there is an urgent need for innovation in order to increase the pace of diffusion of Western training and knowledge to the FNSWP militaries.

**The IMET Program.** The International Military Education and Training (IMET) program has been the mainstay of exchanges with the FNSWP defense establishments since 1991, having benefited many of these countries' highest-serving civilian and military personnel. Since the overall funding levels for IMET are decreasing while the need for U.S.-trained personnel in the FNSWP countries remains extremely high, the situation may call for the appropriation of special additional funds to support the military educational ex-



changes with the FNSWP states. The funds could come as a result of special appropriations designed to promote cooperation under PFP. The important point is that funds appropriated for training of FNSWP personnel provide an enormous return in the future; it is money well spent. Although arguments could be made to expand the IMET program with many countries around the globe, the need to make the FNSWP militaries compatible with NATO militaries provides a special rationale for increasing the funding for the IMET program for these countries.

It is notable that the problems encountered by FNSWP officers in training as part of the IMET program appear to be no different from the problems encountered by students from other parts of the world. For example, it is a common problem for U.S.-trained officers to be shunned by suspicious or envious colleagues when they return to their countries. Similarly, since it is usually the best and the smartest who manage to be trained as part of the IMET program, their drop-out rate when they return is usually high. The IMET program needs an extensive evaluation to see if any changes in the selection and training process might solve these problems. Above and beyond the IMET evaluation, there is also a need for a specific effort to evaluate and address the special problems, if any, encountered by FNSWP personnel while studying in U.S. military educational facilities.

**"Inner Leadership."** In addressing the issue of civilian control over the armed forces and attempting to help restructure the FNSWP militaries, the United States might usefully draw upon the West German approach to building its military in the 1950s. Just as the Germans then faced a problem with the need to break with their history and create a military committed to upholding a parliamentary democracy, operating within clearly established bounds, and accepting civilian control, the FNSWP countries face similar problems today. They have to deal not only with the authoritarian communist legacy but also, in some cases, with precommunist-era authoritarian traditions. The comparison should not be exaggerated, but the present, somewhat unintegrated nature of the FNSWP militaries into their societies bears some similarity to the role of the pre-1945 German army as a "state within a state."

Now as then, the goal should be to develop an "army of democrats." The West Germans devised the concept of *Innere Führung* (inner

leadership) that accomplished just that, by doing away with blind obedience in the military, providing explicit justification for soldiers not to follow orders when the orders went against civilian authority, and strengthening a soldier's understanding of the democratic order and his tolerance for pluralism. The training of every soldier along the lines of "inner leadership" not only strengthened the capabilities of the FRG military, it also secured the military's role in a democratic German society.<sup>5</sup> Both the German democracy and the German military were better off as a result.

The U.S. armed forces operate along a similar principle, in that U.S. soldiers are to disobey any orders that contradict the U.S. Constitution. U.S. assistance (perhaps jointly with Germany, as a NATO initiative) in setting up a program along the lines of the German "inner leadership" in the FNSWP militaries would contribute to safeguarding the transition in those countries and make their militaries more compatible (at the conscript level) with those of NATO.

#### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In the realm of technical assistance, the United States can play a major role in helping the FNSWP armed forces to achieve a level of technical efficiency that will enable them to operate effectively alongside U.S. units. Such a goal would advance both the short-term objective of the PFP and the long-term objective of eventual integration into NATO. There are also substantial regional deterrence benefits from raising the current limited capabilities of the FNSWP militaries so that they can effectively safeguard their countries' sovereignty. The U.S. role is useful because it allows U.S. policymakers to ensure the defensive orientation of the FNSWP armed forces.

One of the main goals within this context should be to ensure compatibility of equipment in the short term and eventual standardiza-

<sup>5</sup>See Wilfried von Bredow, "Conscription, Conscientious Objection, and Civic Service: The Military Institutions and Political Culture of Germany, 1945 to the Present," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, Vol. 20, No. 2, Winter 1992, pp. 289-303; and Wayne C. Thompson and Marc D. Peltier, "The Education of Military Officers in the Federal Republic of Germany," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 16, No. 4, Summer 1990, pp. 587-606.

tion in the long term. Because of its overwhelmingly Soviet origin, the equipment used by the FNSWP militaries is not compatible with that used by the United States and other NATO militaries. This presents substantial problems for joint FNSWP states' operations with the United States. The procurement of NATO-compatible equipment by the FNSWP militaries would be the ideal solution. For a variety of political and economic reasons, however, such an option is not realistic in the near future. Instead, compatibility generally will entail the modification and modernization of existing weapon systems. Once the current drastically low defense budgets in the FNSWP states begin to climb (as a result of the success of economic reform measures), procurement of NATO-compatible weapons may begin. Because of the recent improvement of the Polish economy, Poland's defense budget may have significant procurement funds as early as 1996. The Czech Republic is also a strong candidate for some procurement funds by 1996-1997, though the strong antimilitary outlook within Czech society may slow the trend. The other FNSWP countries might not have any noticeable procurement funds until the late 1990s. All of the FNSWP countries will probably not begin to have the funds necessary for major weapons purchases until the 21st century.

Ensuring the compatibility of the equipment of the FNSWP forces most likely to operate alongside U.S. units in the near future should be the top priority. The priority within that category should be given to communications. Since any FNSWP units participating alongside U.S. units in peacekeeping operations will probably need U.S. deployment and logistics support, it is worthwhile to consider selective improvements in their armaments or in mechanical components of specific weapon systems. For example, standardization of gun caliber and ammunition on AFVs will provide for a measure of interoperability, while improvements in the mechanical realm, such as upgrading armored vehicles with better engines and transmissions, will improve the ability of FNSWP armored vehicles to keep pace with U.S. units. Both types of improvements will limit the need for unwieldy logistical arrangements. As a basic principle, any major weapon systems that will be used in peacekeeping operations and will remain in service beyond the next 4-5 years in the FNSWP militaries might be candidates for the selective improvements outlined above. Without equipment upgrades, logistical difficulties will limit

the deployment of FNSWP units of any meaningful size to little more than the immediate vicinity of their home countries.

The modification of existing FNSWP weapons to increase their compatibility with arms used by the NATO militaries will entail substantial cooperation between the defense firms in the FNSWP countries and those in the NATO states. Lower costs in the FNSWP countries make coproduction and licensing arrangements attractive and provide these countries with their only viable near-term procurement prospects. Because of the current severe budgetary problems in the FNSWP states, the United States and NATO need to stimulate cooperation with the defense industries in these countries as part of the PFP process by "jump-starting" it. This could be accomplished by granting credits for selective improvements in areas of mutual interest, such as equipping rapid deployment units earmarked for participation alongside U.S. forces in peacekeeping missions. Air defense is another area where mutual interests overlap. Such improvements would have economic as well as security benefits to all parties concerned.

The cooperation that may emerge in the defense economic sector has important consequences for the long-term goal of integration of at least some of the FNSWP states into NATO. Because of the obsolescence of their equipment, the FNSWP militaries face a massive effort to modernize their arsenals. All the FNSWP states want to diversify their source of supply away from the former Soviet Union, and from Russia specifically. It is important that the United States does not act to prolong their dependence on Russian suppliers.

With the goal of eventual integration in mind, U.S. policymakers should consider developing a comprehensive and integrated program for providing military assistance to the FNSWP countries to help them modernize their armed forces. Sales under the program should be based on explicit criteria, including consideration of the impact of any weapons sales on the overall regional balance. Assistance in the form of grant aid and purchase of equipment at low interest rates should also be an integral part of the program. Equipment that is phased out of the U.S. forces in Europe as they are drawn down could also be designated for the FNSWP states under a special arrangement.

At the same time, policymakers need to be careful that U.S. arms sales do not aggravate local rivalries and conflicts. In this sense, the United States needs to pay special attention to how its increasing security ties with one country influence the perceptions of power shifts among the neighboring countries. This is particularly true in the case of Hungary, because Romania (and Slovakia, to a certain extent) regards any military advantage for Hungary as working to its own disadvantage (zero-sum perception). The United States therefore needs to avoid exacerbating threat perceptions and thereby stimulate a cycle of rearmament in the region.

### U.S. PRIORITIES AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

As the United States develops ties in the security realm with the FNSWP countries, it needs to distinguish between first- and second-tier priorities. For reasons of strategic location and the level of political and economic reform, the central European states deserve the greatest attention. Within that grouping, Poland occupies a special place due to its large size and population, crucial location, substantial military, and demonstrated willingness to cooperate with the United States on a wide range of security issues, including peacekeeping. Through its actions so far, Poland has solidified its standing as the most serious and most important U.S. partner among the FNSWP states. Although there are substantial differences between the Czech Republic and Hungary, both countries deserve a roughly similar level of U.S. attention.

Due to the slower pace of the transitions in Bulgaria and Romania, these countries belong in the second tier. However, they should not be neglected. It is in the U.S. interest to encourage the reform process in both those countries and assist their transitions as much as possible. This can contribute to enhancing regional stability in an area that traditionally has been—and continues to be—highly unstable.

Slovakia presents a special problem because of its small size, uncertain commitment to economic reform and democratic pluralism, and treatment of minorities. A highly nationalistic, undemocratic Slovakia would be a source of instability, especially if it began to curtail significantly the rights of the Hungarian minority. It is important, therefore, to encourage Slovakia's integration into European

institutions so as to moderate its foreign and domestic policies and to provide incentives to follow the path toward a market economy and a pluralist, tolerant society.<sup>6</sup> In the realm of defense, Slovakia has faced difficulties not encountered by any of the other FNSWP states, since it has had to set up its military almost from scratch.<sup>7</sup> In view of this, Slovak efforts at participating in PFP are worthy of special support.

It is in the U.S. interest to support regional cooperation among some or all of the FNSWP states. Regional cooperation is no substitute for membership in Western security organizations but can complement it in important areas. Moreover, given the constraints on defense budgets in all of the FNSWP countries, cooperation in areas such as peacekeeping training or airspace management and air defense would amount to the maximum use of resources. In addition, joint weapons procurement would increase purchasing power. Such cooperation would contribute to the overall goal of standardization and greater compatibility with NATO weapons systems, and it would also moderate intraregional tensions.

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<sup>6</sup>There is also the consideration of preventing potential Slovak arms sales to areas of tension. Although the Slovak arms industry has lost most of its capacity due to the economic restructuring since 1990, a successful political transition would be the best guarantee of stopping arms sales to unsavory clients. For information on the process of restructuring of the defense industries in the FNSWP states, see Thomas Szayna, "Defense Conversion in East Europe," *East-Central Europe in Transition*, Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, 1994.

<sup>7</sup>During the Warsaw Pact era, Czechoslovak armed forces were stationed almost exclusively in the Czech lands. The deployment made sense from the Soviet point of view. The deployment meant no major problems for the Czech armed forces after the breakup of Czechoslovakia. However, the limited military infrastructure in Slovakia has caused substantial difficulties for the Slovak armed forces. The viability of Slovak air defense is especially questionable.